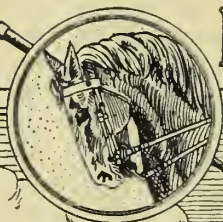


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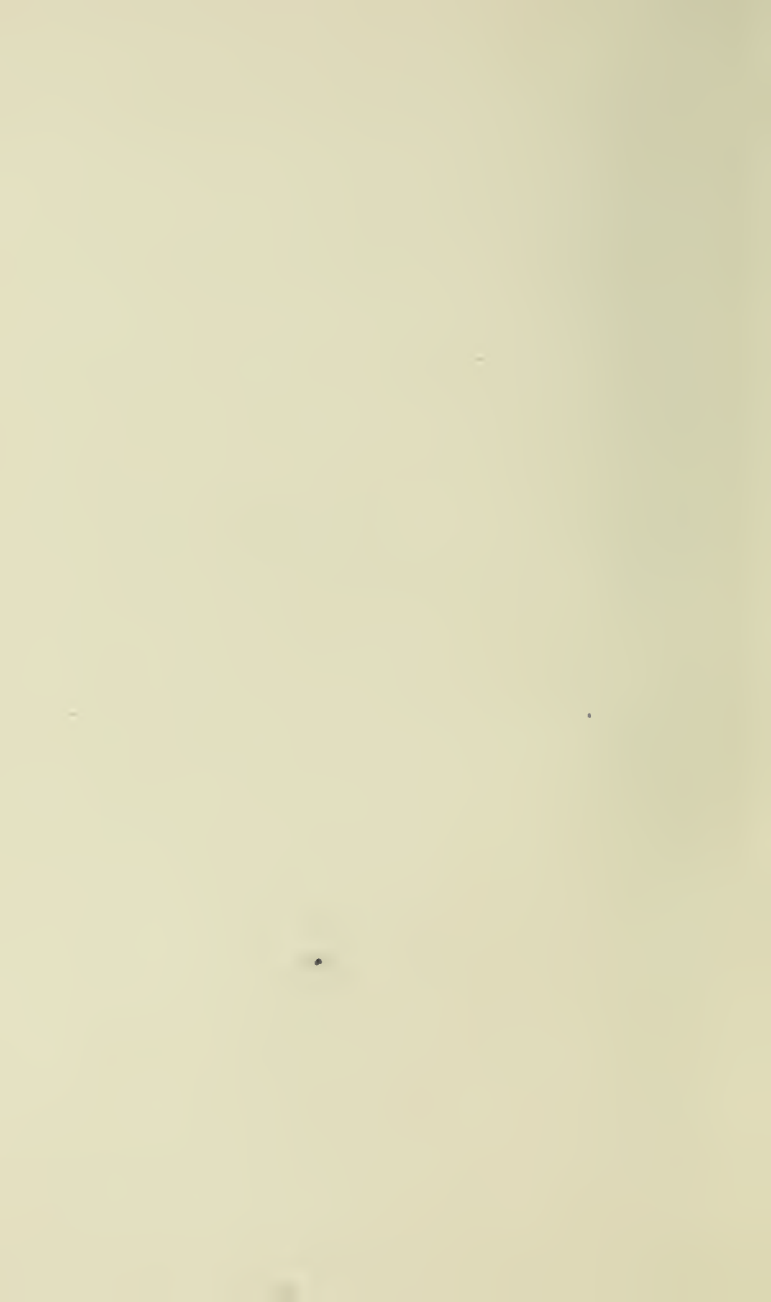
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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND
OTHER QUESTIONS OF PEACE



THE
LEAGUE OF NATIONS
AND OTHER
QUESTIONS OF PEACE

BY

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THE RUSSIAN FRONT

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I
SOME
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

I

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

THE war has been a crucible. It has tested every weak spot in our preparation, our equipment, our knowledge, and our aims. It has lit up one after another all the principal questions in Europe, and shown even the man in the street what is the only natural solution of each. It has taught us not only geography, but what are the national aspirations of each country. It is our cleanness of purpose which it has tested most severely of all. How, for instance, could an Englishman defend us against the charge of selfishness from German propaganda agents in Russia unless he was prepared to give a clear and convinced answer to the questions put to him on Ireland and on India? It is precisely on this principal count of cleanness of purpose that the war has declared itself

against Germany. The act of peacemaking is going to test us in all the ways that I have mentioned much more sharply even than the war ; it is the severest examination of all.

At such a time we shall need all the information that we can have on subjects which have not earlier engaged our attention, and these impressions from a travel in other countries may perhaps be useful in this sense.

I think we are all feeling a vague confusion of ideas consequent in part on our attempt to follow the Germans in their use of propaganda. We have said a good many things which we are not quite sure that we mean, or at least exactly how we mean them. One has seen signs of this confusion in a certain anxiety with which the Press followed the various pronouncements of President Wilson in his enunciation to the Germans of the famous Fourteen Points. Perhaps, as with the war itself, the first demand that is made on us is a moral one, though it is this time a moral effort of the intellect—namely, that we should clear our minds.

Is Imperialism condemned all round ; and, if so, what exactly is Imperialism ? I suggest that a place has still to be found in the peace for the influence of a civilised community over a less civilised one, if exercised with an ordinary regard for the welfare of the latter. If this is excluded, one may fear that the new peace may destroy as much as it creates, and that principles intended to guarantee peace may thus become the occasion for new wars. For myself, I will assume that the rights of plebiscite and the League of Nations—principles in which I am a convinced believer—are not the only means for securing that lasting peace for which we all hope. I would judge the case of the German Colonies not on the fact of German possession, but on the way in which German power was applied. The opposite test is to renounce what has been the mission not only of England but of other countries ; and one may ask that a proper sphere for the continuance of a rightly used imperial influence of one country over another may be found ; otherwise, some of the questions raised by

the war will be found incapable of any solution.

Next, as to the freedom of the seas, which is so far no more than a formula. What does it mean? The British control of the seas in this war has so far secured the triumph of freedom on land—for instance, for Belgium and Serbia. It has also made it possible for our American comrades to take such a decisive part in the settling of European issues. The alternative to it is, I suppose, an international naval force carrying out the instructions of an international tribunal. Who would keep up this force, and would it in another war do the work which the British Navy has done in this? As to the freedom of the seas in peace time, so long as England has pursued a policy of Free Trade, and, while controlling the seas, has kept them open for all, this freedom which we have given has been the very sheet anchor of our international position and has knocked the bottom out of any reasoning coalition against us. We need not take account of the German view; the

Germans are quite mad on this subject. It was Free Trade England that made possible that commercial growth of Germany which gave her the strength to fight us ; and their real grievance against us is not anything that we did, but the fact that we are we. Since Free Trade, no other country has sought to overthrow our sea control, and it is certainly not with any increased liberty of the seas that the Germans intended to replace it.

Our naval policy grows out of our geographical position. For us the seas are the arteries of communication between scattered and self-governing Englands ; both our trade and our navy are the outcome of this position, and to renounce them is to renounce ourselves.

One more question of general principle : What exactly is the issue in the argument about an economic boycott after the war ? At one time such a boycott is regarded in the light of reprisals and is denounced by the man of peace. At another, the founder of the peace of the world looks to it as the one

effective weapon to be used for inflicting the will of a League of Nations on refractory countries, and as the future substitute for the armaments of the past. One can believe that the boycott is one weapon, but not the only weapon, to be used in international conflict, and that it will be employed in one measure or another not only by an international tribunal but by any state which controls its own economic policy and which, quite apart from the question of reprisals, is guided by the pursuit of its own commercial advantage.

II

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Près de la borne où chaque état commence
Aucun épi n'est pur de sang humain,
Peuples, formez votre Sainte-Alliance
Et donnez-vous la main !

BÉRANGER, during the "Holy
Alliance" of Monarchs.

II

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

HERE is the idea to which we are all looking to secure the peace, and not without very good reason, both in recent experience and in the nature of things.

There is no assurance that there will never be another war, or even a more terrible one than this. Stranger things have happened even than the abolition of war, and efforts in that direction cannot be dismissed as simple utopias. But we have no right to count on this result, least of all because a present cruel experience is so fresh in our minds. One thing we can and must do, and that is to diminish in every possible way the occasions for new wars ; and the surest way of doing this is to give every nation its natural frontiers and the right of settling on the widest possible national basis its own form of government.

The war has made world politics a primary interest with every individual. This needs no proving, but I will give two striking examples. In April 1915 an Austrian prisoner said to me: "I do not understand why there should be all this fighting; it is all one to me to what state my home country belongs." And now, after infinitely more suffering, the peoples of Austria are themselves carrying out a greater enterprise even than the war—the assignment of the national frontiers of each, and the return of each section to its natural affinity, whether inside or outside of the Habsburg state. To take another instance, the Russian democrat of the spring of 1917 was ruled by an overwhelming movement of the masses in favour of peace at any price. What has he found? That the farmer's most valued possession—his bread—has since had to be defended from the conqueror, who needed it as much as he did, at the entrance of his own farm, instead of, as before, somewhere near the frontier. The evils of the old system are shown up not by any discovery that there

was really nothing to fight for, but by the discovery that men have a right at least to know for what they are fighting, and, above all, not to be driven up in masses to fight on the wrong side.

But in speaking of a League of Nations people have in mind much less the right of individual nations to their own frontiers and their own form of government than some kind of inter-state machinery for the prevention of wars. This may prove possible. There is every reason to work for it, and there is far more hope of success now that nations are speaking for themselves and not through the old language of the bureaucracies of states which might represent nations or might not. But our real basis is the rights of the individual nations themselves. This is the substance ; and the League of Nations is a hope which can be founded on it and on no other foundation.

If this is the root of the matter, it becomes imperative, firstly, that the representatives of the nations which make peace should think in terms of nations and not of states. We

cannot yet say that this is wholly true ; it never will be until the peoples themselves take such an interest in and acquire such knowledge of the affairs of their neighbours as to be able to form a competent judgment as to what each of those neighbours is, what he wants and why he wants it. It is nothing less than ludicrous that we, the greatest Empire in the world, have given so infinitesimal a proportion of our national brain power to acquiring a knowledge and understanding of these subjects. When an informed opinion on them stands behind a given national government, then an intelligent decision of all the thousand questions of detail connected with the peace may be hoped for ; and the price of an unintelligent settlement is new wars.

Who are the Czecho-Slovaks ? How many Englishmen knew even the name before the war ; and yet the Czecho-Slovaks, really Austrian prisoners, conquered Siberia for the Allies when Russia was in dissolution. Why ? Because they wanted a Bohemia independent of any German domination. It

is a fair inference for any member of a democratic state, that if he cannot form an intelligent opinion on the Czecho-Slovaks, it may make the difference that his grandson may have to be killed in Manchuria. Another instance : What did we know of Serbia before the war, and what did we care ? We associated Serbia with dynastic intrigues and revolutions, which were only the froth on the top of a struggle of a brave people for its very existence, a people whose courage could form one of the most effective barriers to the march of German domination towards our own possessions in Egypt and in India. In the sequel Englishmen have died for freedom at the Hill of Megiddo.

The pass examination for a member of Parliament has been the answering of hecklers at the hustings. It was a standard which did not include any test of knowledge on the enormous number of special questions with which we are now face to face. Why ? Because the heckler himself did not have this knowledge. It will have to be included in the future.

The actual process of peace-making must take many months of specialist labour. The best knowledge in the world will not be too much for the issues involved. No country will have a greater influence in the settlement than England, not only because we are strong, but because we are democratic, because we are fair, and because we ourselves are only secondarily involved in many of the issues which have to be settled.

What are the conditions which may give power and effect to our voice? They are two : first, the massing of all our best knowledge for the task itself ; second, the creation of an informed opinion throughout the country on all the issues to be decided. That is how we can contribute to the making of the nations themselves, and when we have got our nations right, we shall be able to set about making our League of Nations too.

III

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND THE PEACE

Sooner wrap ourselves in our flag and sink in the ocean than admit the currency of such principles.

WILLIAM PITT on restriction of
British sea power.

III

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND THE PEACE

FOR an Englishman the first questions must be those which concern our own country.

We went into the war as a united nation, and not to make but to resist an aggression, attempted not against us but against others. We shall in any case be well rewarded by the removal of a danger which certainly also threatened ourselves. But we shall not for that take up the position which is clearly indicated in so many German utterances, official and unofficial. Germany evidently has entertained the hope that she may detach President Wilson from the Allies by turning him into a kind of umpire between herself and England, the fourteen points constituting the rules of the game. The German attempt has met with no success, but it will not for

that reason be abandoned. The German conceives a "Conference Table" at which we shall all sit as members of a common committee and argue about each other. He has tried the way of force and has failed, and now his only hope is this. At first sight he is a good arguer, because for a German diplomatist ever since Bismarck principles are no more than pawns in a game, and a certain pliability follows therefrom.

At the Congress of Vienna, after the defeat of Napoleon, the Allies held separate discussions to determine in advance their joint decisions. At one of the general meetings one of their spokesmen was so careless as to dismiss a given question by saying: "That is already decided by the Allies." "Who are the Allies?" asked Talleyrand in his best committee manner. "C'est une façon de parler," said the incautious speaker. "C'est une façon à changer" (It is a way you will have to change), replied Talleyrand, and, so well did he manipulate his committee, that if Napoleon had not returned from Elba, there would very likely have been a new war with

different sides for which the two parties had already defined themselves, and two of the great powers were likely to be on the side of France. This is the kind of thing which the Germans will hope to repeat.

Let us assume for the sake of argument that von Kühlmann represents Germany at such a conference. He did his best to secure this rôle when he dared the first public pronouncement of German statesmen that the war could not be won "by the sword alone." With von Kühlmann we are dealing with the man who made the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest. The first was the most patent swindle ever imposed on a credulous and exhausted people, and to every principle which von Kühlmann professed at the beginning of the negotiations he was patently untrue in the course of them. The second was an object lesson of exactly what we intend to make impossible by creating a League of Nations. Clearly, having no common language with him, we shall have to tell him what terms have been decided by ourselves.

Our test is our own conscience. We cannot too much consider the inferences which follow from our own professions, but there is no common "stool of repentance." We shall not forget that we have fought for freedom and that we have fought on the winning side. No academic theories of the freedom of the seas will turn our victory into a means of paralysing that force which has contributed to it more radically than any other—namely, England's sea-power. In the uses to which we put it now, we are no longer at the time of Pitt, any more than in the economic policy of which our sea-power is an instrument. In the present war we have employed it with such restraint that America, who was against us in Napoleon's time, and whose direct interests in a European struggle are purely maritime, has this time joined us ; and it was the German conception of freedom of the seas—namely, the submarine warfare—that decided her to do so.

German propagandists in Russia at the meetings at which we had to endeavour to answer them, invariably put up the two

questions: "What about Ireland? What about India?" These arguments were constantly on the lips of Trotsky, whose financial connection with the German General Staff, that is, with Lüdendorf, has been established beyond dispute. In fact, Trotsky, before he came to power, used to lecture every Sunday against us on these subjects almost next door to the British Embassy.

As to Ireland, we may surely take up the position that what we gave when we summoned the Irish Convention was precisely self-determination, and that the further controversy as to Ulster is simply a development of the same principle, namely, the rights of minorities. As to India, no Englishman has any need to apologise for the influence which we have exercised over the Indian population, simply because Germany has so disgracefully misused her power in her own colonies. Our obligation, which we accepted and faced even before the war, is to give to the Indians full satisfaction of all the initiative which they can employ in the management of their own affairs. The story is by no means

at an end ; but it will be for us to face the demand for independence when it comes to us from the people themselves with as much volume as the cry of the Slavonic peoples of Austria for a release from German domination.

As to the future of the German colonies, we have committed ourselves to a common settlement by all the Allies, and more we could not do. But the first account will have to be taken of the welfare of the populations themselves, and, second to that, of those neighbour communities with which they will live in the closest contact.

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IV

GERMANY'S WESTERN BORDER

La lisière est plus forte que le drap.

French Proverb.

IV

GERMANY'S WESTERN BORDER

THE Napoleonic wars ended with the creation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This settlement was planned by William Pitt, though he died ten years before the end of the war. Nothing on the continent of Europe has ever so much interested us as the neutrality of the Netherlands. The breach of it was for us the starting-point of all the wars of the French Revolution. This traditional policy of ours was the scrap of paper which Bethmann Hollweg thought we could dismiss as a trifle. We could never have dreamed of a stronger confirmation of it than Germany's invasion of Belgium in this war.

The restoration of Belgium's integrity was, of course, a point on which we could never waver. The only question could be, whether

this last aggravation of the causes which led to the creation of an independent Netherlands should not now lead to the strategical strengthening of that independence. The less anything of this kind is needed, the better, but after what has happened, the German people cannot be surprised if it finds it difficult to convince us of our security.

The Germans have been eager to assure the world that although Germany was beaten the German army was not ; and that is near the truth. This powerful instrument has not been broken, unless this has been done by the revolution. But there is an inference from this fact which the German has not emphasised. Till this weapon is broken, the picture of the future must be of an England, Belgium, and France in defensive alliance as throughout the war, and of a strategical position which will set up a much more immediate resistance to attack than in the past.

One part of this question is already clear—that France recovers Alsace-Lorraine, torn

from her in the first stage of Prussia's struggle for world mastery. In a museum of captured French arms in Western Germany I read, thirty years ago, the inscription :—

“ Ist gross zur See einst unsre Macht,
Dann, stolzes England, gute Nacht.”
(When once our power is great at sea,
Then, haughty England, good night.)

The Frenchman learned in 1870 very much of what we have learned only now about Prussian domination and Prussian methods, and he knows that the present war is a continuance of the last. A German song of the present war—one of the best—begins as follows :—

“ The trump of war now sounds for all ;
The whole earth answers to the call ;
All round the hostile flags unfurled ;
A people marches on a world.”
(Ein Volk zieht gegen eine Welt.)

The seizure of Alsace and half Lorraine—we may notice the cynical “ half ”—was a step in the process which we now have to reverse. Justice for the past and security for the future unite in the demand that Alsace-Lorraine should be reunited to France.

Alsace and Lorraine have never reconciled themselves to the severance. The sense of nationality, or at least the strength with which it is felt, is a relative thing. The future is for those who will go on caring ; and nowhere is this more true than in matters for reparation. I have never seen a peasant population with a more acute sense of a wounded nationality than in Alsace-Lorraine. "No one," wrote the Polish poet, Mickiewicz, under even more tragic circumstances, "realises what his country is to him until he has lost it." There was no real German State when Lorraine and Alsace first learned patriotism of France—the patriotism which bred Kléber in Alsace and Ney in Lorraine. The Marseillaise itself, the hymn of peoples, was written on the suggestion of the republican Mayor of Strassburg for the volunteers of the Rhine. The two provinces have given more than their share of great patriot soldiers to the French army. So it has remained ; and the impression of my own tramps in this country was summed up for me in the simple words of a Lorraine peasant. In reply to

my surprise at the strength of their feeling so long after the transfer, he did not even put it down to the separation; he assumed that they were still part of France: "But you know, sir, the hem is stronger than the cloth"—this old frontier France is the strongest in patriotism of all.

A German of Cologne, with whom I was travelling to Strassburg, went further. "Do you think we have done ourselves any good in all this time here?" he asked. "No," I said. "Neither do I," said he, and then, to my surprise, he went on: "And in my own part, even, if you had had a plebiscite in my boyhood, though the French had only been there for twenty years, and that long ago, I am sure they would have voted for France rather than for Prussia; and no wonder."

Alsace-Lorraine was called "the Imperial land," a vassal province of the united principalities of Germany; and on a German map of war aims in the present war I have seen France, too, marked as "New Imperial Land." But it was Prussia much rather

than Germany that was felt in Alsace-Lorraine. "You are worse than the Prussians" was a common reproach for extreme rudeness. German soldiers did not like being quartered there: "Sky and soldiers" was their description of it; for them, the population did not exist. "I shall not get photographed in this hole!" said a German soldier. In Metz even the shops of the two nationalities were distinct. On the east of the town stood the statue of Ney pointing to Germany; on the west that of the first Emperor William pointing to France; each had his back turned on the other. A question in the wrong language would not receive notice.

It was the same in the villages. Women came to their doors and even shook their fists as the German soldiers went past. "You see," said a peasant when I asked if time would not soften the feeling, "what the next generation will be like. You know what the women count for with us: our children will be keener than we are." As a Bavarian military band played the Sword Song of

Körner to a stolid village audience, an old grey-haired peasant, as he turned away, murmured ironically : " Nous avons la gaîté dans notre village." An Alsatian, asked if he was French, replied bitterly, " No, I am German—annexed ! "

And it has been the same on the other side of the frontier. The wound of the loss of these provinces has been at the bottom of the French consciousness ever since. It is mother and daughter calling to each other. Everyone knows that the statue of Strassburg on the Place de la Concorde at Paris has continued throughout to be decorated with wreaths of mourning ; but the feeling was no less strong elsewhere. On the extreme western edge of France, at a time of no political excitement, I have come on a whole company of simple folk, singing as if it were just after the annexation :—

" Alsace et Lorraine, ces deux pauvres sœurs,
O race Germaine, tu brises leurs cœurs ;
Mais là-bas, la France travaille toujours,
A leur délivrance pour de plus beaux jours."

These " bright days " have come. France

has not won back her children in a war in which she has been the aggressor, but in the most magnificent defensive struggle in her history, which she accepted in loyalty to her engagements to others. No worthier circumstances could have attended the reunion.

V

AUSTRIA

We do not ask you to govern us better ; we ask you to go.

DANIEL MANIN to Austria.

V

AUSTRIA

WHAT is Germany's southern border? Germany's southern border is Tyrol and Saxony. But Prussia's southern border is, or was until recently, Bagdad. That is the difference between German nationalism and Prussian commercial militarism; and to change the second back into the first is to deal the real death-blow to the Junker on this side. This blow had to be dealt through Austria.

We in England know little of Austria. In this war there has been nothing more necessary for us to understand than what Austria was, and what purposes she served.

Let us attempt to draw this most interesting and by no means unattractive portrait. There was in the world an imperial idea, that of Rome, and it was in its later stages

deeply the enemy of nationality. The Papacy in its policy was also no friend to nationality ; for one empire makes for one church. Through the Middle Ages there was a quarrelling alliance of Empire and Papacy to rule the world between them ; but all this time the centre of the Empire was in Germany and that of the Papacy in Rome. Nothing could be more disastrous to the German people, whose national life was entirely neglected. The nations of the West—Spain, France, England—detached themselves from the whole imperial system ; Germany remained crushed under it, a prey of wrangling princes for whom a state was no more than an inheritance, a marriage dowry, or a conquest.

After the wars of Guelf and Ghibelline—that is, between the Popes and the Emperors—the idea of the Empire collapsed and lay in the dust ; it was then that the needy and canny princes of Austria took it up and used it for what it was still worth, namely, a means of acquiring territory. They usually had on hand a good stock of marriageable daughters,

who were expected throughout life to keep in view the Habsburg interests. It was flattering to be son-in-law to an emperor, and marriages have enabled a Habsburg to reign in nearly every country in Europe : Spain, Portugal, England (Philip and Mary), the Netherlands, Burgundy, Hungary, and a good part of the Slavonic world.

Around the throne there grew up a school of acquisition which is responsible for many of the characteristics of European diplomacy. The army was an international galaxy of cavaliers ; the infantry was always the weak side ; it was of course invariably defeated, but diplomacy almost invariably turned defeat in the field into victory at the " Conference Table." Austria, having no national existence, was always ready to take anything — whatever other people did not want, or if there was a doubt as to who should have it ; and not being a nation, Austria never inspired fear or even hatred outside her borders : there were no real Austrians to hate. Thus Austria, by a series of consolation prizes, was pushed about the map, generally eastward,

in a kind of adjustment of the interests of others, which was called the Balance of Power. Austria usually posed as the defender of the *status quo* against the dominant power of the time in Europe. Thus she was the centre of many a coalition in which we were often sided with her, and she usually ended on the winning side. In Thugut's time (during the French Revolution), though constantly beaten in the field—"everyone beats the Austrians," said Suvorov—she had over ten different simultaneous schemes of annexation. A.E.I.O.U.—"Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima" (When the world goes down Austria will be the last thing standing)—this was the device of one of the earliest and most typical Habsburg princes, Frederick III. "Austria is like bird-lime," said Charles Felix of Savoy.

All this succeeded because it did not very seriously injure anyone who counted; and nations at that time counted for nothing. The Habsburg sovereigns, hardly any of whom were blessed with much brains, were very intimate with their peoples; and nowhere was there more strongly developed

the patriarchal instinct of loyalty. The Emperor was to each of his various peoples the master of the estate, a kind of glorified squire. But when, with the French Revolution, the spirit of nationality leapt forth all over Europe, the old Austria was doomed. She survived this struggle, but henceforth it was for her a fight for existence, and the Imperial Crown of Germany at this time passed finally away from Vienna, which, lying at the very corner of Germany, could never be the centre of a national state. What Germany had to let drop, another German frontier state, Prussia, later picked up.

In 1848-9, when there was again revolution all over Europe, the Austrian State nearly dissolved, and Francis Joseph, who came to the throne at that time, had at first to struggle with revolution all over his Empire. Regarded as a state in those early, un-national days, Austria had its advantages. Peoples, or fragments of peoples which had not yet found their national consciousness, were benefited by receiving a general political education in the school of Austria. In this

sense, Austria was almost already a League of Nations, and might well be the precursor of another wider and more modern League, only *not* with the same arbitrary frontiers and *not* with any dynast at all. Austria was already travelling fast in this direction when, in 1866, she fell into the hands of Prussia.

In 1866 Prussia engineered a war with Austria and drove her out of Germany. The enterprise was so cynical that the sole author of the war, Bismarck, has said that he would have committed suicide had it not succeeded ; the Germans still call it "The Brothers' War." But far more interesting was the use to which Bismarck put his victory. A guileless conqueror would have established Prussian supremacy over the German provinces of Austria, which amounted to about one-fifth of the Austrian Empire. Bismarck did the opposite ; he actually cut the links which still united these Germans with Germany and, while using his victory to make himself more absolute master of the rest, he deliberately left the Austrian Germans outside to rule in Germany, that is to say, in

Prussian interests, as large a non-German population as possible. With this object he formed with his defeated enemy the closest alliance.

By this he profoundly altered the whole character of Austria. The Habsburg State, which had been acceptable because it represented in Europe no strong national aspirations, became the simple instrument of the narrowest nationalism of all, that of Prussia. It was 1866—nothing earlier, it should be remembered—that really poisoned Austria with Prussianism and made the present world war inevitable. Austria became the advance guard of Prussian militarism in its march towards Bagdad, for the creation of a Mittel-Europa, and the oppression and extermination of all Slavonic liberties which stood on the road.

There has been no military blow to Prussia more grievous than the capitulation of Austria. There is no more effective way of ending with Prussian militarism than by breaking up the Austro-German alliance and giving a free national life to all the suffering races of the

Austrian Empire. And in this, no account can be taken of the Habsburg dynasty or of its old arbitrary frontiers. These various races—Poles, Siberians, Roumanians, Russians—will all return to their natural affinities without even adding more than one to the number of states in Europe. It was not with the Habsburgs that President Wilson consented to discuss the question; he referred them for the decision to these peoples themselves.

VI
THE ADRIATIC

VI

THE ADRIATIC

ITALY AND SERBIA

THE German-Austrian footholds in the Adriatic region consist of outposts amid an alien population. To secure these footholds and to push them further, German-Austrian policy has induced us all in the past to wrong Serbia and Montenegro and to wink at a continued wrong to Italy. The settlement of the last Balkan wars was entirely wrecked by Europe with that object. Serbia was deprived of her rightful gains and was forced to ask Bulgaria for a compensation which the latter should not have been called on to give. Meanwhile, a new bogus Germany was to be created in Albania, which had never had a real political existence. To go further back, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which

are simple Serbia, were annexed to Austria after a war in which she had had no share, the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, and Serbia and Montenegro, which are both of them Serbia, were separated by an unnatural extension of Austrian territory to prevent them from ever uniting. This was what Bismarck has called "honest brokerage."

Naturally Italy and Serbia will divide all this area between them on the general lines of nationality. There has been a long connection between these two races, and both are completing their national unity as parts of the same movement, both against the same enemy, Austria. The policy of "Divide et impera" has fomented jealousies between the two; Austria's policy was to use Slavonian troops to keep down Italy, and *vice versa*, so that the Croatian soldier passed into the tradition of the Italia Risorgimento as the instrument of tyranny. There was even a time (in 1848) when the leaders of the first half-hearted movement of Italian unity, such as Cesare Balbo, put their hopes for the liberation of Italy in a further extension of

the power of Austria over the Slavonic peoples. Far truer, however, was the instinct of Mazzini. This man, to whose heart and brain was owed the conception of *Young Italy*, has also left on record his schemes for similar organisations for the regeneration of the Slavonic peoples ; and it is his dream which is now coming true in a war in which Italy and Serbia have been fighting on the same side.

The Italian movement of liberation from Austria, which is now being completed, was the cleanest and most spiritual of all the national movements of the nineteenth century. The time of struggle was preceded by a long series of individual martyrdoms under hopeless odds. The record of Silvio Pellico's captivity in a Slavonic land, Moravia, which by the way illustrates the sympathy of the Slavonic population and the un-human character of the Austrian despotism, has been described as equivalent to the loss of a pitched battle for Austria. "Stranger," reads the epitaph written for one of their comrades by Pellico's fellow-prisoners, "you

will have a country on the day when you restore these bones to theirs."

Cavour and Garibaldi left Italy united but for the Trentino or southern and Italian portion of Tyrol, Trieste and other Italian districts on the Adriatic littoral, and these have ever since been spoken of by Italians as the "Italy Unredeemed." Now the liberation comes of itself, with only the need of a just accommodation between Italian and Serbian interests. There remains, however, the question of the Albanians, an unsettled people with whom freedom means little more than lawlessness, and in whose future Italian control might not unreasonably be called to play a part.

For the Serbians there is a wider question to be settled, but it is rapidly settling itself according to the wishes of the populations themselves. The Serbs of Austria, whether of Bosnia, Herzegovina, or Hungary, must of course be allowed to join their kinsfolk. These were the very first to come over to us in large numbers on the Russian front and to express the desire of taking a second turn

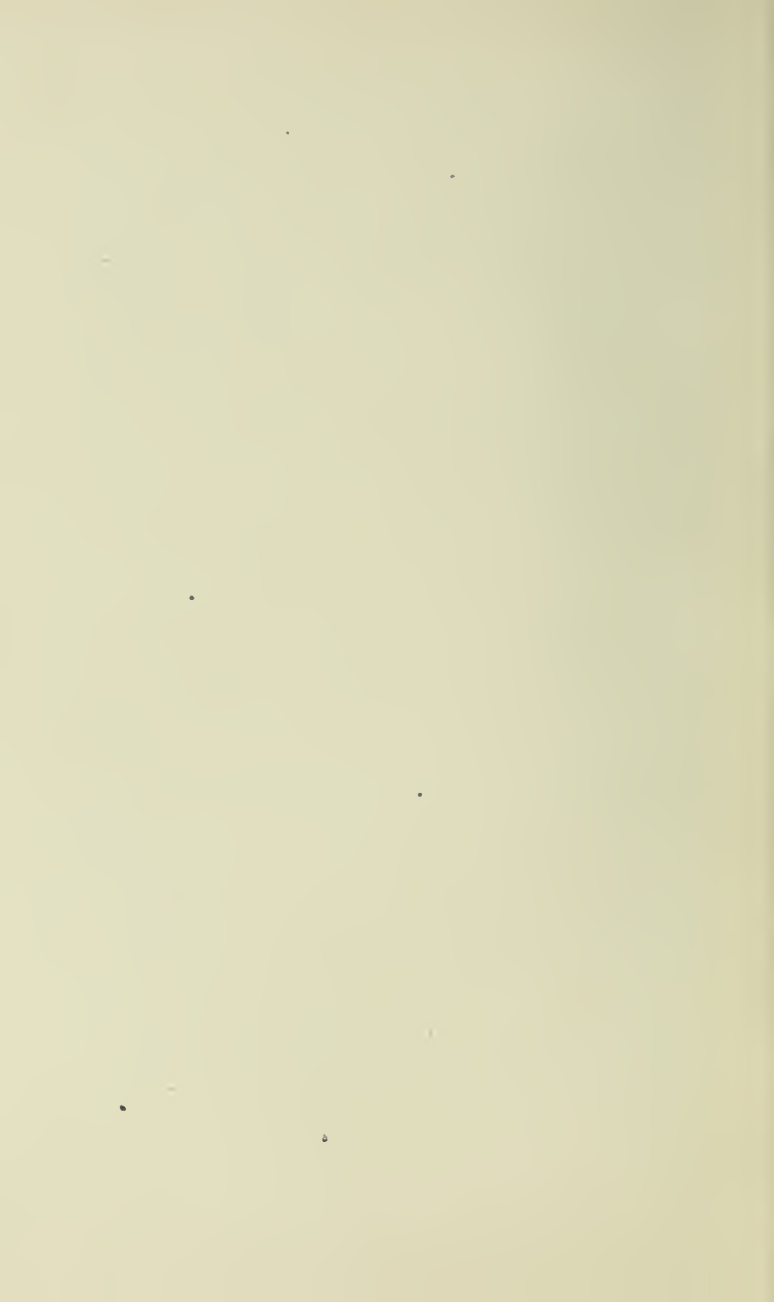
at the war, this time on our side. Austria has been more severe to these populations during the war than to her enemies in the field, and Austrian officers have written with a shudder of the faces which they saw in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the dark days of our retreat. But the Croats and Slovenes living further north, who are first cousins to the Serbs, have not suffered less. Their country, though never actually touched by the war, was declared to be war area, and they were ordered to evacuate *en masse* to concentration camps in Hungary, where in one case as many as twenty-five thousand were allowed to perish of cholera without any medical attention. They were replaced in their homes, as long as the war permitted, by German and Hungarian settlers. Serbs and Croats have been pleading their cause in common to the Allies throughout the war, and the organisation of a South Slav (Jugoslav) state is almost completed and has already our recognition. For the rest, these peoples have now taken the matter into their own hands and realised their independence,

which the Habsburgs have not even been able to refuse.

The last Habsburg ruse was to adopt President Wilson's principle of a League of Nations, but to apply it, as Kühlmann and Czernin did in the swindling negotiations of Brest-Litovsk, without any change of existing frontiers, so that each fragment should be a little toy nation under Habsburg rule, separated from its kinsmen over the border. But Wilson was too well informed, and checkmated this move when he referred the Habsburgs to the decision of the peoples themselves; the Serb and Croat districts, like the Italians of Trieste and Trentino, will go home.

The new settlement gives a free and independent Serbia with a good sea coast, and already brings the Austrian frontier close to Vienna. The war began with the attempt of Austria to crush independent Serbia, and ends with the independence of the Serbs and Croats of Austria herself. Such a result was worth waiting for, and nothing less will constitute the proper barrier to the German

campaign of conquest in the middle east. The wonderful courage of the Serbians and the unspeakable devastations which they have suffered should be repaid and recuperated by nothing short of full national unity.



VII

THE BALKANS

The Eastern Question is not to be solved in the Balkans. The Eastern Question can only be solved in Vienna.

GENERAL FADEIEV.

VII

THE BALKANS

BULGARIA, GREECE, ROUMANIA

THE just settlement of Serbia will make possible the just settlement of Bulgaria. It was never anyone but the Habsburg Government that put both of them wrong.

It is interesting to note that at informal discussions of peace questions of the Balkans in February 1916, in which leading members of the Russian Duma took part, Professor Milyukov, the future Foreign Minister of free Russia, who was in the chair, continued to advocate the claims of the Bulgarians in Macedonia even after they had aroused the intensest indignation in Russia by coming out against us, and that on this point there was general agreement.

The Bulgarians, a Slavonic race with a

strong admixture of Asiatic blood, owed their liberation from the Turk to Russia and in a lesser degree to England, and in both these countries the movement in their favour was founded on national sympathy. Russia and England being opponents in that period, the successive occupants of the Bulgarian throne balanced themselves between the two ; but it might have been assumed that in a war in which we and Russia were allied, Bulgaria would at least not have been against us.

The second Balkan War was a tragedy. When Austria deprived Serbia of half the fruits of victory, the whole equilibrium among the triumphant Balkan States was upset. Again, as so often before, the Austro-German "Conference Table" reversed the verdict of the battlefield and prepared new wars. Serbia asked Bulgaria for a redivision of territory ; Bulgaria was obstinate, and the plucky army which had borne the heaviest brunt of the joint fighting against the Turk found itself surrounded on all sides with enemies. "It was a mistake," said General Radko Dimitriev, then Bulgarian minister in

St Petersburg, "but we have paid together too bitter a price for it." The following Treaty of Bucharest was a standing iniquity : it has been said, though this is an exaggeration, that not one of the changes of territory which it made was really justified on the ground of nationality. Under this wrong, it was only because Bulgaria was worn out that she could wait for a chance of recovery as long as she did.

In the present war Bulgaria found her rivals on our side. An even greater determining factor was the probability of a Russian Constantinople, which, under an unreformed and dynastic Russia, threatened grave danger to the small States on the Black Sea. Over and over again we were warned by Bulgarian newspapers that if Constantinople was to be Russian, Bulgaria would have to be against us. The third determining factor was the intriguing ambition of Ferdinand of Coburg and the skill with which he could wire-pull the politics of his country. There is a resemblance to Prussia in the metallic businesslikeness and the megalomania of

the Bulgarian, and he found himself enlisted as a junior partner in a campaign by which top-dog races were to conquer and hold the East. The Prussian has been beaten ; the scheme has collapsed ; the Bulgarians have surrendered at discretion and rest their only hopes in the plea of nationality ; the settlement, delicate as it will be, will not require half the ingenuity which it took to postpone it.

The Greek part in the war was for a long time ambiguous. The courage of Venizelos brought Greece to the right side before the Prussian fear was removed from her, and the detail of Greek claims should be easy to satisfy at a time when Turkey has so decisively accepted defeat. It is more than something that the collapse of the war finds the Serbo-Greek alliance restored. The collapse of Austria and of the Mittel-Europa scheme means for Greece the removal of a constant source of disturbance.

Lastly, there is Roumania. This mixed race, of which the distinguishing marks are its Latin language and Latin-Greek civilisation, could never have hoped for its unity

from battle or diplomacy, and could only base it on a League of Nations. It covers Bessarabia, annexed by Russia, and Transylvania and the Banate, annexed much earlier by Hungary ; and no two states were more certain to be on opposite sides in any general war than were Hungary and Russia. On the other hand, there is no race whose unity is more convincing than Roumania's when rounded off on a map of peoples, as there is none to which statecraft has given in the past such a lopsided figure.

Roumania was bound to balance between the two sides longer than others. Roumanian prisoners from the Austrian army used to say : " When we come out, you will know which is the winning side." In the sequel, however, Roumania's entry into the war was penetrated with tragedy. First, there was the military collapse, then the desertion by Russia, and, lastly, the last brutal Treaty of Bucharest, the standing model of Prussian war aims. Yet the impossible has happened : Russia and Hungary, the two enslavers of Roumania, have both collapsed of themselves

in the struggle, and the League of Nations is become the starting-point of the Peace.

The Magyar will not easily resign his Roumanians, whom he has done everything that he could in a hundred ways to turn into second-hand Magyars, though with no success at all. A united Roumania means a very diminished Hungary. Only a war that paralysed states and cracked societies could have loosed the Magyar's hold. But the settlement which alone can make for peace is now inevitable. The sundered provinces of Roumania will come home.

VIII

HUNGARY

Extra Hungarian non est vita,
Aut si vita, non est ita.

Hungarian Proverb.

More was lost on Mohacz field.

Hungarian Song.

VIII

HUNGARY

HUNGARY will have to lose her Roumanian and her Serbian provinces, and also her Slovaks.

The Magyars have many friends in England, and no wonder. The survival of this sturdy and militant nationality through centuries of the greatest stress, its wonderful tenacity under the Turkish yoke, its great revival, its appeal to us in the name of liberty at the time of Kossuth against that very Austrian despotism with which it has since gone into partnership—all these things were marked with a spirit and with qualities which could not fail to go home to all our English instincts. But that is the very reason why we shall now have to insist that Hungary shall give up her Roumanian, Serbian, and Slovak subjects.

The story of Hungary is a brilliant one. The Magyars came from Asia well on in history and settled in the prairie which they now hold, isolated by blood from all their neighbours. Early accepting Christianity, they became the most sturdy of all barriers to another Asiatic army, the Turks. The greatest of their rulers were native born. On the field of Mohacz the Magyar chivalry at last fell under the weight of numbers before Suliman the Magnificent, the greatest of the Turkish Sultans; but Hungarian independence continued to be vindicated by many desperate individual resistances, such as that of Nicolas Zrinyi, and the Magyars wore out their conquerors and at last regained their independence. During the Turkish occupation the sacred crown of St Stephen, the symbol of independence, was for a period buried, and received that twist of the cross surmounting it which still appears on the Hungarian coins. There might not be a king, but there was a crown, and since the Habsburg connection—the result, as so often

elsewhere, of a political marriage — the Magyars have always insisted on a separate coronation in Buda-Pesth and on the use only of the title of King of Hungary.

The period of national unification which began in the last century, and is now being completed in this, saw Hungary to the fore ; and from the time of Palmerston, who received the great exile, Kossuth, the Hungarian patriots have always counted on English sympathies. Hungary, like Italy, is one of the countries where there is a general feeling of friendliness towards England ; and it will probably be found that our prisoners have been well treated there during the war. The liberation movement of the forties did not succeed ; Hungary, though for a moment independent, was forced back into Austrian subjection by the army of Nicolas I. of Russia in the sacred name of autocracy. There followed brutal reprisals, including the flogging of women, which made the name of Austria stink in England ; and when the executioner, Marshal von Heynau, visited Barclay &

Perkins' Brewery, he got a ducking in the vat from the drayman. However, there followed a national movement without war, in which passive resistance in a most vigorous form played a great part ; and when Francis Joseph had to accept defeat from Prussia in 1866, he turned his attention to conciliating his Magyar subjects. Hungary secured complete equality in the counsels of the Habsburg Empire, and complete independence in her own affairs.

Hungary won her liberty, and English sympathies were with her to the moment when she won it. But 1866 was also the sinister date which turned the Habsburg monarchy as a whole into an instrument of Prussian ambition ; and Hungary, a responsible and vigorous partner in this course, denied to other nationalities that which she had won for herself ; on the contrary, she extended her rule over new Slavonic populations, and no element in Austria-Hungary was more energetic than the Magyars in prosecuting that aggression on the liberties of Serbia which brought about the present

war. Tisza, the strong man of this policy, has fallen ; but Hungary has yet her price to pay.

The Magyar mind on this subject is quite intelligible. Among alien populations and with a history of desperate fighting, the Magyars were spurred to imperialism by the fact that they do not actually inhabit their only defensible frontier, the Carpathian Mountains. These mountains were, on the contrary, the original home of the Slavs, and it is surprising how tenaciously they have clung to them. In many places on the eastern slopes the peasants describe themselves by the word "Russian," talk the Russian language, and decorate their houses with ikons. The Slovaks further west in this range were easier for a Russian to understand than were the Poles. I remember how these Slovak prisoners and our soldiers sang their songs to each other. The Magyar, then, "drowned in an ocean of Slavs," and regarding dynastic Russia as his hereditary enemy, was nothing if not Imperialist ; he would defend it, as the Prussian would, as an imperialism

of self-defence. The great nobles have taken so large a part in Magyar history that their patriotism and their masterfulness have stamped themselves on the nation, which is essentially that kind of "nation of top-dogs" which Prussia preferred for partnership in the great burst eastwards. Imperialism, which is in Prussia a matter of policy and command, is with the Magyars in the blood itself.

That is why the issue of the war comes hardest on Hungary, and one may feel for her a pity which we cannot spare for the Prussian. The Hungarians had infinitely more than their share of the Austrian fighting and of the losses, and they held good throughout. But here too, as in Russia, society has cracked of itself, and this has precipitated the conclusion. A party which was, throughout the war, almost an insignificant minority—that of Count Karolyi—now finds itself at the top, and is itself threatened at the present by the menace of a general break-up. At such a time even the recognition of

Slovak independence has proved to be possible.

It was in the name of nationality that Hungary claimed her own liberty, and that liberty has now to be accorded to others.

IX

THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS

Bohemia is a fortress created by God himself.

BISMARCK.

Before Austria was, we were ; and when Austria
no longer is, we still shall be.

PALACKY.

IX

THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS

So far, in the disruption of the Habsburg monarchy, there is no occasion for the creation of a single new state. Serbs and Croats will go home to Serbia, Roumanians to Roumania ; the Poles, of whom only a fraction belong to Austria, pass outside the border to form part of revived and reunited Poland. The Magyars remain Magyars, but cease to be anything else. The Germans of Austria, rather more than one-fifth of the population of the monarchy, will settle their own fate ; but it will be impossible by pressure from outside to prevent these from joining with their fellow-Germans of Germany, from whom they have only been separated since 1866—with what results to Prussia would remain to be seen.

There will, however, be one nationality,

the Czecho-Slovaks, which will constitute a new state. Even this is not quite accurate. Bohemia was once a practically independent member of the loose German federation. Even after it became Habsburg territory, as usual by marriage, there was a separate Bohemian Crown taking a place with those of Vienna and Buda-Pesth ; and Napoleon was only following a traditional idea when in 1809 he thought of separating these three Crowns, afterwards changing his mind to become the most splendid and the most parvenu of all the sons-in-law of the Habsburgs by his marriage with Marie Louise, a step to which he later ascribed his ruin.

But it is in a very much more vital sense that the Czechs of Bohemia have maintained their tradition of independence. Once their vigour was such that they began the movement for the Reformation, and in defence of their religious liberties they conquered all the enemies surrounding them under John Zizka, one of the first creators of modern infantry. They went down under weight of numbers and through their divisions, but

they were no easy subjects for the Habsburg Emperor (Frederick II.), who said of them : " Rather a wilderness than a people of heretics "—and the protest of their stubbornness under oppression has passed into the words of Schiller : " A people to whom that has been done is terrible, whether it bears the wrong or avenges it."

In modern times and in modern forms this spirit of independence has been the most striking manifestation of nationality of the last hundred years. In a Prussianised Austria, to be used as an instrument of German aggression, there was no place for the vigorous Czechs, who, being Slavs, were bound to be a centre of Slavonic protest. German and Magyar in partnership, the former with his Czechs and the latter with his Slovaks, tried to repress every sign of national spirit. In reply, the Czechs set themselves to fight in detail every small or even local issue in their country, where it was a question between Czech and alien. There has been no such demonstration of the strength of the little people, and the minute-

ness of their efforts was too much even for the thorough-going Germans themselves. The foundation of a school, the administration of a charity, everything was an occasion for Czech insistence, which always triumphed because issues of this kind are always in the end decided by those importunates who never cease worrying about them.

The amazing part of the whole story is that Prague, the capital of the Czechs, lies on the direct railroad from Berlin to Vienna, and is thus at the very starting-point of that enterprise which was to create a German Mittel-Europa. The Czechs were not, like some small nationalities, constantly petitioning distant powers for their liberty ; they were no more disconcerted than Switzerland by their lack of access to the sea, which was for them out of the question ; they were not daunted by the fact that they were themselves the first and most obvious prey for German penetration ; they simply fought every issue as it came up and won it by their own forces, and in a very real sense their independence was secured before they

claimed to mark it on the map of Europe. This achievement was the result of the closest and most thorough-going national organisation which has ever existed. The Sokol (Falcon) gymnastic associations in particular made it possible long before the war to mobilise the nation as a whole for any object which claimed a united effort.

The rest, wonderful as it is, has followed of itself from these apparently small beginnings. The Czechs showed the greatest self-control till the Russian armies approached the Moravian plain, then came over to us in an organised mass movement, formed their own corps in the Russian army, and, in spite of all our reverses, never turned back. When the Russian army dissolved, the Czech Corps in it did not ; for Austrian subjects who had fought on our side, there was no salvation except in the victory of the Allies and no return but through the liberation of their country. Retreating in the midst of chaos from the German penetration of Russia, they tried like a modern Ten Thousand to make their way out through Vladivostok, con-

quered Siberia on the road, and stopped there to establish a new Eastern front. Their fellows in Bohemia showed courage no less signal. It was they who dissolved the Austrian Parliament and also the Austrian Empire, and they formed already an advance-guard of the Allies within an airman's distance of Berlin. The Mittel-Europa scheme stops short now on the frontiers of Saxony.

The Czechs have asked nothing of us but to be on our side, and they now ask nothing but the confirmation of their independence, already won by themselves. And Czech independence is the strongest of all guarantees that the old Austria will never rise again.

X

POLAND

The man who persecutes my language wants also to rob me of my mind and life, the honour and the rights of my people.

HERDER.

Poland is divided, but the Polish people is indivisible.

DMOWSKI.

X

POLAND

THE partitioning of Poland between the three autocratic empires of Russia, Prussia, and Austria shortly before the French Revolution, by which a historic state and people was wiped from the map, was realised at the time as so far one of the wickedest deeds of absolute monarchy, and gave as much fuel as any other event to the growing protest of nationality against sheer statecraft. Yet this wrong has remained unrighted until now.

Poland had prepared her own partition by inviting in the foreigner to interfere in her own affairs. She did this when she established an elective monarchy, for which every Great Power or group of Powers might have its candidate. The cause of Poland's ruin lay deeper still ; for the elective monarchy

itself was the invention of a number of wrangling nobles, always fighting or intriguing, who excluded the whole body of the people from any interest in the State. Poland was, so to speak, an army with cavalry and no infantry. At that time it did not even possess a middle class—a rôle which was filled by foreigners and still more by Jews, who, though encouraged by certain special liberties, could not be said to form part of the civil State.

It was the ruin of Poland that gave birth to Polish nationality in that broad sense in which the expression would now be understood. The French Revolution itself helped to produce a spasmodic effort to save the lost cause of independence; it was led by the national hero, Kosciuszko, who had fought for the independence of America, and when it failed, many Poles followed the banners of the French republic and of Napoleon. A measure of Polish restoration was indeed effected by Napoleon, and as long as he and it lasted the opportunity was well used for further democratising the country,

particularly in the matter of education. But the Congress of Vienna drove Poland and Italy back into their bondage.

I never knew anything more poignant than to pass through Poland. The Poles are and always were a high-spirited people, as ill-suited to bondage as possible. To find your national sense wronged in every most elementary detail of your life can only be tolerable if you can gradually lose the instinct of nationality altogether. With the Pole, on the contrary, it only became more acute and therefore suffered the more. The two closest things to nature for any nation are land and language. Take these from a country and that country will cease to exist. This was the constant attempt of Poland's three masters, whose solidarity in the crime of the partition for a long time bound them closely together, not only in Polish matters but in all other policy. If the fall of autocracy does not mean the liberation of Poland, it means nothing at all.

The fact that Poland had three masters differentiated her fate from that of any other

conquered people. It is terrible to have a network of frontier lines that meet on your very hearthstone—in this case, close to the old capital, Cracow, and to the national holy place of Czenstochowo. The dividing line runs, so to speak, through the middle of families that have roots in more than one of the three partitionments. The bruised Polish nationality had to live by turning to account any alleviation offered by one of the tyrant governments ; and Warsaw, Posen, and Cracow have each in turn had some kind of comparative advantage in clemency. In the same way, any little rift in the union of the three governments was for the Pole an occasion for desperate hopes that he might win back a little of that for which he cared most in the world, his national existence. Divided between three empires, Poland could not be without interest in the slightest breeze that fluttered the peace of Europe. Thus the tortured Polish soul, in its painful consciousness of a national existence which had now become more real than ever before, wrenched itself instinctively, so

to speak, towards that side on which it could lie with least pain. All this may seem exaggerated, but it came out in even the most trivial little acts of daily life. There was a Pole of Warsaw who taught his dog to bark whenever he heard Russian spoken ; the politeness if, in a tram, Pole or Russian trod on each other's toes was of itself something painful.

From the sixties onwards, after the desperate rising of 1863, the Poles set themselves with a marvellous patience to work out a better destiny. After the so-called " work at the foundations " of Swietochowski came political work of rare ability and self-restraint of a group of Russian Poles led by Roman Dmowski, a man of singular political ability. The Austrian Poles succeeded in winning from their sovereigns a practical autonomy, and Galicia came to be a centre of new Polish life. In Posen, the Poles of Prussia fought and defeated the most minute efforts of the government to take land and language from them and turn their country into a Prussian colony.

In the war, the most far-sighted of the Poles placed their hopes throughout in the Entente, and have shown this in many practical forms of service. Poland has been through purgatory in this war. The wave of conquest went over her not once for all, as in Belgium, but three times, and the villages and churches wrecked by shell fire are almost continuous. The final Russian retreat caused as much devastation as the final German and Austrian advance. Since then, requisitions of everything have left the country bare, and the Germans have carried away all the machinery of the budding Polish industry. Yet the light that has at last dawned for Poland has that same supernatural aspect which one could not help tracing in her afflictions. The Russian and the Austrian despotisms have fallen ; the Prussian despotism has fallen too ; and everywhere, from the smoking ruins of militant autocracy, there issue peoples re-born.

From the day when free Russia, in the person of the first provisional government,

gave liberty without price to the Poles, the issue was infinitely simplified. The Austrian Poles (of Western Galicia) have already secured their *cong  * from Austria. The war must not end without the liberation of those Poles who have suffered under the most thoroughgoing tyranny of all, that of Prussia ; and on that day the Prussian boundary will of itself recede, by the right of nationality alone, half way from the present frontier to Berlin.

XI
THE BALTIC



XI

THE BALTIC

SCANDINAVIA, FINLAND, LITHUANIA

SWEDEN and Norway marked the beginning of the war by drawing closer together for matters of foreign policy, in order thus to strengthen each other's neutrality. A monument of this *rapprochement* on the frontier at Charlottenberg shows two brothers with hands clasped, and this has been passed by every traveller by the railway which the war has turned into the highroad between Western Europe and Asia.

In Norway, public sympathies have been for us ; in Sweden they were for Germany, till the fear of Russia disappeared and the fear of Germany was made acute by the German occupation of the Aland Islands

at the gates of Stockholm. Fear has been throughout the motive employed by the extensive German propaganda in Stockholm. Scandinavia will not lose anything by the disappearance of the German bogey. The understanding between the Scandinavian countries during the war has, however, made some desire a closer union between all three, if only for purposes of self-defence.

For one Scandinavian country, Denmark, the peace ought certainly to bring one reparation, namely, the liberation of the Danes of Northern Schleswig, and for this, voices in Denmark are already asking. Here, again, we shall be undoing the work of Bismarck. He took position as a German nationalist when he attacked Denmark in 1864, but at the subsequent peace he annexed much territory which was unquestionably Danish. This territory does not extend as far southward as the Kiel Canal.

Finland is in the main inhabited by a people of Asiatic family distantly related to the Magyars of Hungary. The Esthonians, a very small people living across the Gulf

of Finland around Revel, are of the same race, of which elements are found all round Petrograd. Both were at one time united to the Swedish Crown. In Finland, where the connection was a long one, there are still many Swedes ; but both Finns and Esthonians in the end were conquered by Russia, who had so long been struggling to reach the sea. In Esthonia there are many German barons, and the conditions are like those of the Baltic provinces further west. .

The Finns received from Russia a guarantee of their local liberties, loosely defined under the head of "constitutions." From the time of her conquest Finland has therefore served as a kind of barometer for registering the rise or fall of liberty in Russia itself ; on the one hand, the Russians were sure to ask for what the Finns possessed, and, on the other, reactionary rulers of Russia were sure to fear the existence of any liberties in Finland. The position was complicated by the relative vagueness of the Finnish claims, to which the Finns were always trying to give greater definiteness, and in this struggle they

have throughout enjoyed the sympathies of the democracies of the West.

Finland, where there was conscription, took less part in the war than the rest of the Russian Empire. After the Russian Revolution, the provisional government of Russia agreed to Finnish autonomy, but insisted that the Constituent Assembly of the whole State must decide the question of independence. The reasons for this attitude were : first, the provisional character of the government itself, and, still more, the obvious strategical importance of Finland to Petrograd. The Bolsheviks on their accession to power in Russia roused the Finnish proletariat against all other classes in Finland ; there was a sturdy resistance to this rising among the Finnish middle class, but the Finnish "Whites" in the end thought it necessary to call in German help, and thus passed into the orbit of Germany. That connection must anyhow be dissolved, and a settlement between Russia and Finland will not then be impossible, especially as Petrograd will probably count for less and less in

Russia, and in any case can hardly remain the capital.

Some accommodation between the Russians and the Esthonians is still more necessary, because the latter live on the Russian side of the Finnish Gulf, and Finns and Esthonians would therefore be capable of blocking the Russian exit to the sea. However, the federative principle universally admitted in Russia ought to admit of some variety which will satisfy the aspirations of the Esthonians.

The area between Esthonia and Germany proper, that is roughly between Revel and Dantzic, presents greater difficulties. We have here to deal with very various elements, often in bitter conflict with each other.

Nearly the whole of this coast-line and a considerable depth inland was originally inhabited by the Letts and Lithuanians. These, who still form the main body of the population, are branches of the same race, a kind of youngest brother of the Aryan family which peoples Europe, closer to the Slavs than any other. With the Esthonian they have no affinity at all, and whatever the

geographical boundary between them,—for it has been subject to the fluctuation of population—it would always be clearly marked by the antagonism between the two races.

To these shores, at the end of the Crusades, came two orders of nominally celibate knights, adventurers from various parts of Germany. The Knights of the Sword seized the area of Riga and subjugated the Letts by methods worthy of their name. The Teutonic Order leased the Dantzic coast from Poland and conquered the maritime tribes of Lithuanians, in particular the tribe known as Prussians, by whose name these knights have since been called ; this was the highly anti-national origin of the monarchy of Prussia. These two orders, which were at one period united, were the ancestors of the modern Junker and of the modern Baron of the Russian Baltic. From their strong castles they ruled with a rod of iron a population which was alien to them ; and in this unhappy country, which was the first school of modern Prussianism, race has remained synonymous with class.

The brutality of the conquest called forth

a vigorous effort from the inland Lithuanians who lived around Vilna. Uniting under a brilliant dynasty of princes, they stemmed the German invasion. They could not dislodge the knights, but they found the energy to conquer in the opposite direction, southwards, where lived a branch of the Russian race, the White Russians of Vitebsk, and Minsk, a rural people who have always lived under some foreign master ; and at one time the Lithuanian State stretched as far south as the Black Sea.

This greater Lithuania was not strong enough to remain self-supporting, and after balancing for some time between Muscovy and Poland eventually joined with the latter. What aristocracy there was became Polonised, and the land-owners of this part are predominantly Polish. The peasants, however, in Lithuania are Lithuanians, and in White Russia they are Russian and of the Greek Church. The rôle of middle class, as in Poland, is filled by the Jews, who, in many of the towns, are even in a majority.

This Lithuania was annexed to Russia at

the first partition of Poland : for the White Russian population it was nothing more than a natural reunion, but the policy of Tsardom was to deny both to Pole and Jew any part in local government and any reasonable share of civic rights. This vast district was for the Russian police a happy hunting-ground of pogroms. It should be remembered that much of the eastern war has been fought in this zone.

What is to be done with all this ^{area} ~~area~~ ? You can hardly create here a national state in the ordinary sense. The most necessary elements do not exist ; races are divided almost on the same lines as class, and the national instinct is weak with the majority of the population. There has lately ^{been} ~~be~~ a not inconsiderable movement of national consciousness among the Lithuanians, even including those of Prussia, but not among the peasants of White Russia. The tenure of the Polish land-owners in what was Lithuania is, with a difference, not unlike that of the German barons on the coast ; they are in neither case fifteen per cent. of the popu-

lation ; nor have the Poles been much more successful in their relations with the peasants than the German barons themselves. Democratic ideas would suggest a Lithuanian State wherever there are Lithuanians, making some kind of a union at its own choice with either Poland or Russia, more probably the latter, with whom, now that Russia is democratic, there are likely to be stronger ties of sympathy. Such a solution would also give the best chance for Jewish liberties. The White Russians will naturally rejoin Russia.

But in Prussia itself, where the ruling race (the German) is far more numerous, the issues are much sharper. To start with, the Poles themselves lay claim to Dantzic, which has around it still a considerable Polish peasant population ; and Polish statesmen make the most of this fact in order to gain direct access to the Baltic, which is otherwise denied to them. Dantzic was once a Polish town, and is near the mouth of the great artery of Poland, the Vistula. It further offers the only economic outlet northwards for the Czecho-Slovaks.

But, besides this, there is the question of the future existence of the Junkers of East Prussia, than which no issue is more interesting to Europe at the present time. Nothing would have persuaded autocratic Germany to allow the renationalisation of this district ; but the Prussian autocrat has fought to a finish, and has now been abandoned by the German people. It was the Junker who launched Bolshevism on Russia, and it would indeed be historic justice if he now proved to be the most signal prey of it in his own original fastness. Neither Europe nor Germany could look on with much pity at the removal of an incubus which had proved a nightmare to both, and the Lithuanian race could then receive in its entirety the possibility of liberation.

XII

A NEW AUSTRIA OF
PEOPLES

XII

A NEW AUSTRIA OF PEOPLES

WHEN in Eastern Europe states mean nationalities, the present Austria will not be on the map. There will remain the Austria Proper of the Upper Danube, but that will find its affinity either with Germany or with a new State consisting only of South Germany, much more probably the former. The rest of the old Monarchy will have vanished into thin air.

Yet the old Austria before 1866 had its uses, and some of those uses still remain. Though there will be no more parcelling of races into fragments to suit dynasties, there will still be occasion for some kind of loose co-operation between the new national states themselves.

In the first place, when the German provinces of Austria have gone home, Germany

itself, even with the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, North Schleswig, and Posen, will hardly be smaller than before, and will anyhow be far the most powerful state of Central Europe. If the old mixed process of conquest and penetration is not to begin again, those peoples which have been freed from German bondage or aggression will have a common interest in being strong enough to hold their own ; and for that they may find it necessary in some matters to act together.

This is most obvious in the matter of self-defence. How, for instance, can a Poland, only now in the hands of the Poles, and wrecked and ruined by the devastations of the war, create the military strength which could make possible an independent policy and present an effective barrier to any German aggression eastwards ?

But even more important is economic strength. Polish industry has been ruined wholesale by the German occupation, in order that, whatever the result of the war, there should be nothing to resist German penetration afterwards. Yet the last years

have shown, and recent events have made us realise far more than before, that the political capacity and industrial energy of Eastern Europe thins down ever more and more as one travels further eastwards. The misfortunes of Russia are due in the first place to the lack of personnel—that lack of experience, responsibility, education, and energy which means a relatively small middle class.

In the past it has often been assumed that no state can be economically independent without a road to the sea. Whether this is true or not,—and, after all, there are always Switzerland and Hungary—it will clearly be an advantage to the smaller states of Eastern Europe, especially to the inland ones, if such roads to the sea as there are can be utilised as far as possible in common.

Further than this, co-operation is not likely to go ; and the rest will be left to the various inter-relations between the different members of the new family of states. The only other question is the probable limits of such a new Austria. Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Roumania, Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland may all possess

some interests in common, and that they should give some form of expression to them, would only be in keeping with the past history of Europe, which at various times—in the republics of Italy, the Hansa towns, or in the old Austria—has called for common action between the smaller units in order that what might not be possible for one may become possible for all together.

On a war map distributed in the German army, the word "Austria" was written over Moscow; and Germany has certainly tried to turn Russia into a second Austria of the old kind. It is not likely that Russia, when she becomes herself again, as she will certainly do, will be an ordinary member of a new Austria of peoples, though she will no doubt have relations with all of them. Russia, as a national unit, is too large, and its past—anyhow, its economic past—has been much more national than the autocracy might have led us to believe. The Russian has all the instincts and the habits of a great people; he has his national church; and the Russian language is spoken over an enormous part

of the earth's surface. The western provinces of Lithuania and White Russia might conceivably gravitate towards Poland, as the source of so much of their culture, but it is more likely that the large Russian population of these districts will make them prefer their old orientation. For the rest, the extraordinarily strong sociability of the Russian people, its corporate instincts, and the interests of its church make it seem inevitable that there will sooner or later be a great movement of reunion, into which even some of the less Russian parts of the old State will be drawn.

XIII

RUSSIA

Russia can not by mind be known ;
There is no common measure holds her ;
She has a stature of her own ;
He who believes in her beholds her.

TYUCHEV.

XIII

RUSSIA

THE home of the Great Russians is a low plateau which presents a kind of square with, roughly, the following boundaries :—West—Pskov, Smolensk, Kaluga, Orel ; South—Orel, Tambov, Saratov ; East—the north to south line of the Volga ; North—the forest wilderness north of the Upper Volga. Moscow, as will be seen, is about at the centre of this block. But this was only where the race grew up, from a mixture of Slavs with the old native Finnish elements. It is a people of movement, and its natural expansion has extended, principally along the rivers, to the Arctic Ocean, to the Urals, and, in a thin stream, through Siberia to the Pacific.

There was an earlier Russia from which all the branches of the Russian race are

descended. It came originally from the Carpathians, and then lay along the whole extent of the great waterway from Novgorod past Smolensk to its capital at Kiev. It was less a country than a road, with tributary rivers as branches, and the hinterlands were either not inhabited or only by insignificant savage tribes. This first Russia of Kiev was overwhelmed by the Tartar invasion and then split into the Great Russians and Little Russians (Ukrainians or Ruthenians) of the present time. Both of these branches have a common origin, a common church, and—despite some politically inclined philologists—a common language.

The main point, I think, of the history of the Russian people is that, when set amidst the greatest dangers and difficulties, it, so to speak, sequestrated private liberties in order to save national unity, of which there was a much clearer instinct than we have realised. It is the greatest mistake to think that Russia was without the tradition of liberties. They are restless people, and they have gone their own way, often with little regard for their

Government, which latterly was a more untrue expression of them than was the case with any other people. There were city republics in the early Russia. The village community, which controlled such important matters as the re-division of land among its members, has endured right through the centuries of serfdom up to the present time. The Russian peasant has as clear an idea as anyone else as to the meaning of this word "community"; for him, in the broadest sense, the community is the basis of the state, and "if the state gets wrong with the community, the community must get it right." This is why we may be sure that there will still be a Russia, and a better one than before because it will issue out of the people itself.

Russia once had a break-up no less serious than this one. It was the disruption of the whole social fibre that led to the election of the Romanovs by what was nothing else than a Constituent Assembly, and of a very representative kind. But the Romanovs, whilst always increasing the Empire, stamped

out all liberty and imposed on the country an alien and largely foreign Government on a German model. Its chief instruments were the German barons of the Baltic, own brothers to the founders of Prussia.

Now all that is over. The Junker has gone bankrupt both in Russia and in Germany. Europe was deeply disillusioned when Russia, after gaining her liberty, at once proceeded to ruin it. The chief cause of this result is one that lies so far from our own experience that it is difficult for us to realise. It is that educated Russians were scarce and that Russians with any political experience were hardly to be found, and that was because the country had been denied in the past all practice of the management of its own state affairs. As an inevitable result there was not more than one capable politician in Russia for every hundred in England. The Bolshevik wave was entirely due to the war and the absolutely colossal casualties. The Duma and Zemstvo men, practically the only persons who had received a political education, were no more than a

drop in the bucket ; they could not be everywhere, and once society had cracked under the strain of war they could not stem the rush of sheer numbers whose first cry was for peace and bread. No single man nor small group of men could have turned back this tide ; some did all that man could do, but thousands were needed where there were only tens. The fall of autocracy was always likely to happen at a moment of convulsion ; such a moment was not likely to give the time for gradual initiation of the country as a whole into the responsibility which it was taking for its future when it at last assumed the management of its own affairs. For this reason it may almost be said that Russia had got to go through such an experience as that through which she is now passing, if, as a country, she was to learn to acquire this instinct. The instinct existed in the management of village affairs ; it had got to extend to the guiding of the destinies of one of the most enormous families of the human race.

The Allies have taken with Russia the only general line which was possible. They

insist on not leaving her to a German monopoly. They enter, and if needs be by force, for Russia is at this time a vast no-man's-land in which the enemy aggressor cannot be allowed to reap all the advantage of his aggression. But they have formally renounced annexation or the imposition of any particular form of government: that is a task for a fully representative National Assembly; nothing else can achieve it. Whilst a clique rules Russia, Germany has always been able to buy that clique, whether it was the ministers of an Autocracy or the leaders of Bolshevism.

The future of the Allies in Russia lies with the Russian people as a whole, who are nearly all our friends. The National Assembly will have to make its own mistakes, but it must be national; and even if its first act were to re-establish a strong authority, it is certain that at such a juncture of the country's history every individual citizen must take a part in its decisions.

The new Russia will anyhow include the whole Great Russian population, which is of

itself a matter of more than eighty millions. It is certain to include Siberia, populated in the main by the Great Russian race, though equally certain that the union will be on a federative basis with complete self-government, after the model of our own overseas dominions.

With Siberia it is not a question of race : the need of self-government is chiefly felt in economic affairs, which have in the past been regulated solely with consideration for the advantage of European Russia.

In my own opinion, it is equally certain that the Ukraine (Little Russia) will later reunite with Great Russia—again, of course, on a basis of complete self-government. The Ukraine and Great Russia, the granary and the forest zone, are absolutely necessary to each other, and it was the junction of the two that morally fixed the position of the national capital at Moscow. It is not generally known that the greatest emigration for land in Russia is from the Ukraine and into Great Russia, especially Siberia ; this, again, is a link which cannot lightly be broken.

The Ukrainophile Separatist movement based its first claim on difference of language. Living for over a year during the war with Ukrainian troops, I never heard officers or soldiers speak "Ukrainian," nor heard the word "Ukraine"; at the Ukraine National Congress last year some speakers apologised for not knowing Ukrainian, and the language of the corridors was Russian. Already there has been partial investigation of the voluminous intrigues of the Prussian General Staff for the starting of a Separatist movement in the Ukraine, and it is certain that much more will come to light in the future. Neither the Ukraine nor any other part of Russia is likely in the future to tolerate the impossible and utterly inefficient system of centralisation which prevailed under the Russian Autocracy. The settlement of the question will have to be left to the Ukrainians themselves; but I believe the time will come when they will find the satisfaction both of their needs and of their aspirations in a reunion with the rest of the Russian family.

The Ukraine or Little Russian population extends as far as to the San in Galicia, and even further west along the Carpathians. For these Little Russians the Austrians invented the word "Ruthenians," which is simply a foreign rendering of the word "Rusin," which means "man of Russia." During the Galician occupation, Ruthenian troops were constantly coming over to us wholesale or in detail. I remember a wounded Ruthenian prisoner telling me that the reunion of Eastern Galicia to Russia repaid him for his wound. The Russians sent in to administer the country from Kiev could communicate with the inhabitants with an ease which the ordinary Austrian officials could not command. This province, the last fragment of the empire of partitions, will rejoin the body of the Little Russian race.

XIV

TURKEY AND THE EAST

“If we so develop the circle of our economic influence as to bring all Asia into lasting and close relations to us, we shall thereby open the possibility in a future war of marching down to India and rolling the British rule from the continent into the sea.”

German Pamphlet, Spring 1918.

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XIV

TURKEY AND THE EAST

GERMANY has three different directions for an attack upon her neighbours, and her trouble was that she never made up her mind between them, and ultimately found herself trying all three at once with the whole world in arms against her.

The heroic road, that which would appeal to the militarist Junker, was on the sea. It lay past the gates of England, who was here the principal enemy, and led out to the whole world. Ultimately this road was to have been attempted last, and the substance of Germany's grievance against us when we entered the lists in this war was that we had not waited for our turn.

The second direction would appeal more to the trader of Western Germany. It was that of peaceful penetration through the

weak and unwieldy Russian Empire. It was never quite realised here how much this project had already taken shape before the war. It was, in fact, in full execution. The industrial revolution which followed the emancipation of the serfs in Russia very quickly changed all existing economic values there, while at the same time it called insistently for the inflow of foreign commercial energy. Of this the Germans, who were accurately informed on the subject, took the fullest advantage. Poland, by leave of the Russian Autocracy, was studded with strong outposts of commercial Germany; but further eastward, the Germans, backed by the influence of the Baltic barons at Court, were also securing something like an organised monopoly in certain trades. When Germany sent her arrogant ultimatum to Russia, she was convinced that Russia would not accept the challenge. When Russia did, Germany realised too late that it was almost impossible to conduct penetration at the same time as an attack, and that what she stood to lose by her challenge in the hold which

she had over the Russian Empire as a whole, was more than she could hope to gain, even with considerable annexations. The intrigue with the Bolsheviks, however, made all things possible, and we are still faced with the danger of a Mittel-Asien after we have done with a Mittel-Europa.

It was the third direction which was the actual occasion of the war. During the years of mailed-fist diplomacy, Germany's most marked success was the hold which she gained over Turkey. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein succeeded in maintaining with the Young Turks that masterful influence which he had possessed with Abdul Hamid. The substance of the German diplomatic triumph at Constantinople was the Bagdad Railway with all that it involved. In countries sparsely populated, to hold the one through railway is to hold the country, and Germany had leave even to garrison this line. Impudence reached its limit when we in England were asked to supply capital for this scheme. The Bagdad Railway was a direct route of conquest, separating near

Aleppo into two branches, of which one made for Persia and India and the other for Egypt and Africa. It was because the Serbians lay on the road that they had, in the language of a Viennese newspaper during the war, to be swept from the face of the earth. Hungary and Bulgaria, ruled by men with ambitions, were partners in the project ; Austria itself was under German direction ; Turkey might almost be said to be in German hands ; German agents were busy in Persia.

The project has failed, and the peoples whom nature placed upon the road,—Bohemia, Serbia, and Roumania—when they have recovered their independence and their national frontiers, will be the best barrier against a resumption of it. But Turkey will also have to pay the price of a worn-out despotism of one nation over others which has allowed itself to be pushed into this adventure. Whatever else is to be the government of the very large non-Turkish regions of the Ottoman Empire, it has already been made clear by the statesmen of the Allies that it will not be Turkish, and that

the general principle adopted will be to develop to the full the initiative of those formerly subject peoples themselves. The King of the Hedjaz (Arabia) is already one of our allies. A similar solution is indicated for Mesopotamia. Armenia now seems certain to be a single self-governing state with such ties with its neighbours as it may itself desire ; it was with the consciousness of this impending probability that the Turks have tried to abolish the Armenian question in advance by massacre.

The future of Constantinople has probably caused more complications than any other question in this war. The prospect of annexation to a dynastic Russia threatened on one side to embroil the Balkan States permanently, and on the other to create for Russian administration a task with which it would have been quite incompetent to deal. That project has gone with the Russian Autocracy, and it was Milyukov's ill-timed recurrence to this theme that helped the Bolsheviks more than anything else in their campaign against the Russian Provisional

Government. The most general view on the subject is that Constantinople should be a free port, and this idea is capable of various applications. The question which will no doubt interest the public is whether the Turk is in the future to be the master there, or only a visitor.

The overthrow of the Mittel-Europa scheme must not blind us to the fact that the Mittel-Asien project, by way of Russia, is still in progress. Before the war there was an Anglo-Russian scheme for a Trans-Persian Railway which was to be the competitor of the Bagdad Railway. In fact, with the use of the existing Russian railroads this route already reached far nearer to India—as far as Baku. It passed through Kiev, Ekaterinoslav, and Rostov, and this road, with the aid of the German-Russian connection, is the route by which German troops, merchants, and propagandists have already approached India. To defeat the one German project only to see the other realised is not a conclusion which the Allies will accept, least of all when the road of German aggression

is exactly that which was to have been the seal of Anglo-Russian amity. Germany, with Asia for a hinterland, is not a Germany defeated. The downfall of the German arms with its internal consequences in Germany might tempt some to leave this issue undecided, but anyone who knows how much progress has already been made by the Germans in fastening their grip upon Russia could not be satisfied that things should remain as they are. We must have a strong Poland and a revived Russia.

XV

BOLSHEVISM

XV

BOLSHEVISM

THE fact that matters, when we talk of Bolshevism, is war-weariness. It was not to be escaped in such a huge struggle, and it is everywhere. Bolshevism itself is nonsense, a disease, and can have no future. But we have to take the same account of it as of any disease which we have to face—as, for instance, of the war itself.

War-weariness varies in different countries. The casualties and the devastation have not been the same everywhere. After ten months' fighting the Russian casualties (including prisoners) amounted to 3,800,000. This was the official figure, though not published at the time, and, to judge from the army which I accompanied, it is an under-statement. An operation of four days on an average cost the Russians forty per cent., because they

were without the necessary munitions. I remember seventy-five per cent. falling in five hours ; and at another place, where we drew our battle, seventy-five per cent. in four days. Just before the break in the Russian army, the average unit had been renewed entirely between eight and ten times. These losses covered the whole country with cripples ; for the Russian Red Cross patched up for further service about forty per cent. less than the German. One brother uninjured out of five was not an unusual proportion among the peasants.

In these circumstances a propaganda as energetic as that of the Germans in Russia could have enormous results. The argument might be used in all belligerent countries—This is a capitalists' war, and the poor man loses a leg. But with every cripple telling his tale of unequipment, it could reap a golden harvest.

There is quite as much difference between various countries in their measure of public enlightenment, responsibility, and share in the management of public affairs. Nowhere

was the standard in these matters lower than in Russia, and the undoubted patriotism and religion of the Russian people could not make good this lack.

The Bolshevist campaign came out of Germany. The centre of socialism itself is there : Karl Marx was a German ; and a socialist Russia was bound to have a close connection with Germany. The cynical part of the campaign was that it was run directly by the Prussian General Staff itself, that is by the Junkers, by Lüdendorf. The money paid to Lenin & Co. was paid from the Staff ; their communications were with the Staff. This means that the Bolshevist campaign in Russia was a military and not a civil weapon of Germany : plans were timed to give definite military results, as in the famous concentration of all efforts in the first week of July last year : independence of Finland, independence of Ukraine, mutiny at Kronstadt, Bolshevist attempt on Petrograd and German advance. The military advisers of the Bolsheviks, disguised as Russian sailors or soldiers, were from the German General

Staff. What it cost the Junkers to tamper with the Russian fleet is now apparent ; and, if the Junkers get killed off like the bourgeoisie of Russia, historic justice will at least have said its word.

Coming to Bolshevism itself, the doctrine, but for its effects, would not even merit examination. The root idea is that the proletariat govern without any other class ; it is a kind of inversion of the privilege of an official class—for instance, Junkers. It is Junkers that have produced this inversion, and where there are no Junkers, the doctrine has not even a rational explanation. No proletariat ever did or ever could govern. Therefore the famous dictatorship of the proletariat must be exercised not by it but for it by others. Even the principle of election does not enter, because the proletariat, according to the Bolsheviks themselves, does not know what is good for it. It is a dictatorship of self-appointed leaders—one may say of the Junkers of the Left. But the substance of Bolshevism, that which separates it from all other shades of socialism and even gives it a

separate language and a separate psychology, which no one else can understand, is that there must be a class war and that the proletariat must turn all other classes into proletariat by legislation, but also by extermination. In the result, there is chaos and ruin for the society which succumbs to Bolshevism, while the social contradictions continue on a larger scale than before : there are rich, there are robbers, there are adventurers, but they take the name of the proletariat.

The object lesson which has followed is plain enough for all whom the war has not thrown off their balance. The Bolshevik peace brought the German tyranny into Russia, stronger than ever before, and yielded territory, contributions, and even the sacred right of propaganda. The Bolshevik rule has proved the vulgarest of Reigns of Terror. Here is nothing to imitate.

The Bolshevik propaganda is everywhere. I have heard in South Wales the identical particular twists of argument with which we were familiar in Russia. We heard them

from Germany before they even appeared in Russia. But it would be quite a false assumption to think that they are everywhere equally dangerous. In each given case the foundations for their success are everything. Every element of stability in a country is a weapon against Bolshevism. Victory, national government, the instinct of order, education, the existence of a strong middle class, a tradition among the workers of experience and responsibility both in their own and public affairs—these are the determining factors. In Germany, for instance, the instinct of order makes it very unlikely that anarchy can go as far as in Russia or continue so long ; in Austria the satisfaction of every kind of national claim puts a discount on the likelihood of an international miasma. We have to last out this epidemic as we have lasted out the war, and in England society has much more than the strength to do this. It is recognised that the war, which has called on the energies of the whole nation, must in all sorts of ways further democratise the national life. That

is already an acquisition and beyond controversy. For the rest, there is nothing to do but to keep our senses and hold good as a united society, and the class war will be discounted as a simple call to disorder and as the surest road to national ruin and national ignominy.

XVI
GERMANY

XVI

GERMANY

THE Germans are paying the penalty of following blind guides and sharing in all their follies and crimes.

The Prussian autocracy was the harshest, the vulgarest, and the shallowest in content that there has ever been. It was bred, as we have seen, in a nursery of caste and inter-racial hatred, where every squire was a little All-Highest. It was brutal in war and faithless in negotiation, and nothing but its minute efficiency could have imposed its barren and soulless gospel on the world for a generation. It idealised, if such a word can be used, its own brutality and faithlessness. It continued on a colossal scale all the basenesses of its smaller days. Its all-excusing motto was that Providence is with the big battalions ; and when these were at

last on the other side, it fell of itself and was nothing but a swindle that had not come off. The amazing lack of distinction in the fall of this ponderous structure—no resistance of desperate loyalty, no dignity in the fall of the despot—was only possible in such a soul-killing atmosphere and with a people which has never turned out a Pym or a Hampden.

It is the astonishing want of imagination and want of spirit in the German people that made possible the construction of this tremendous edifice of soulless might. The old easy-going Germany, where thought was free, had found no political consciousness to oppose to this narrow enslavement. The marvellous results of Prussian organisation on the whole impact and effectiveness of German education as creating human instruments for authority, were by their very character killing even for German learning itself. Men of efficiency everywhere: free and independent thinkers nowhere. To realise where this was leading Germany, one need only think of the organised lies of German propaganda, or ask how it would

ever have been possible in an autocratic Germany for any conscientious historian to present to a critical public a truthful account of the swindling negotiations of Brest-Litovsk or Bucharest. The Prussian system was death to humour, to spirit, to imagination, to judgment, to truth. Thank God—both for Germany and for Europe!—the world can breathe again.

There are Germans who are understanding this ; and there are thousands more of them with every day. One such, a German officer with whom I talked in the early days of the war, admitted without reserve : “ I can quite understand how, for Europe, Germany was the troublesome boy in the school, who gave no peace to the others ” ; and when I urged there must be something wrong about this if one turned the whole world against one, including former allies, he replied at once, even in those days of victory, that the whole war was for Germany a catastrophe and one which, by the nature of things, could never be won. But one was never able to discriminate in the natural protest which

Prussianism calls up between the chiefs who made a practice of cutting off slices from the ears of our scouts, the common soldier who thrust a pair of bullets into the eyes of a wounded Russian, and the crowd which whipped a riderless Cossack horse through the streets of Berlin. It is this past of aptitude in brutality that the German people has still to redeem.

Yet, none the less, there is only one way in which Germany can be helped to redeem it, and we who have throughout placed our belief in the principles of humanity cannot be untrue to them here. To take it at the lowest, it is no interest of ours that Germany should be treated as she has treated us : the German example is itself a proof of it. This war has got to end with Germany possessing that which she has tried to destroy in others, her national unity under the Government or Governments that she desires. There can be no parcelling on our side. The unparcelling alone brings the frontier close to Berlin on the side of Posen and on the side of Saxony ; the adhesion, which now seems

inevitable, of the sundered Germans of Austria may lead to the formation of a South German State or, as is more probable, it may not. It will anyhow, so to speak, push Berlin into the corner and overweight the Prussian with the German. But the destinies of Germans will in any case have to remain in German hands.

Again, it is no interest of ours that there should be a Bolshevik Germany or a starving Germany. Our interest is directly the opposite. To quote the illuminating phrase of A. G. G., "A prairie fire does not stop at a frontier." The Russian war with all its horrors was nothing at all in comparison with those of the Bolshevik revolution. Nerve and spirit died beneath them. As the enemy of civilisation, even the Prussian could not compare with the Bolshevik. This last trial, coming on the top of war exhaustion, is the most terrible of all. Civilisation has to be saved everywhere, and must be saved in Germany. Human life has to be saved from starvation in Germany. The Prussian himself, whose foulest deed was to sow Bolshevism

among the scant civilisation of Russia, might, if he had seen this and seen what was to follow for himself, have said : " It is worse than a crime, it is a blunder."

Prussian militarism falls with two events which are already accomplishing themselves : with the liberation from Prussian control of all non-German nationalities, and with the liberation of Germany and of Prussia itself from the control of the Prussian military caste. We have long to wait before we can look with an indifferent eye at the reconstruction of German prosperity and the revival of German commercial energy. The lessons of the war can never be lost in sleep. It will never be wise to forget in the German revolution the thousand and one tricks of the trade by which the whole nation helped to build up the Prussian military and commercial colossus. But what we must wish for Germany, if there is ever to be a League of Nations, is that she may learn her lesson as truly and as fully^{as} as she can.



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